



# Age of Progress.

STEPHEN ALBRO, Editor.

BUFFALO, JANUARY, 6, 1855.

## Professor Brittan's Lectures.

It has been definitely settled that Professor S. B. BRITTON will commence his course of lectures on the Spiritual Phenomena and Philosophy, on the evening of Monday, the 15th inst., at Townsend Hall. The course will occupy four evenings. He is prepared to exhibit astonishing specimens of art, exerted by spirits, through media in the abnormal state. We shall give a minute description of them as soon as we receive it. The well known ability of the lecturer, who is the principal editor of the *Spiritual Telegraph*, should, and doubtless will, fill the hall to overflowing. Nothing can be more important than this subject; and no rational mind should neglect so good an opportunity to be enabled to judge of its verity or falsehood.

## The Governor's Message.

The duties which press upon us as sole editor and manager of this establishment—small as it is—have prevented us from giving the message such a perusal as is necessary to warrant us in speaking at large of its merits or demerits. The hasty glance which we have taken of its contents, impresses us favorably with respect to its general character. We think it may be characterized as an able document.—We intend, before issuing our next number, to read it with attention, and be prepared to speak our sentiments of its various positions, which we shall be enabled to do without restraint, reserve or qualification, being free from the trammels and prejudices of party politics.

The only part of the message which we have read and considered attentively, is that which we have subjoined to this notice; it being the Governor's views and recommendations in regard to the enactment of a law restraining the liquor traffic. As respects the constitutionality of a restraining law, the Governor has no doubt, nor have we. It will be the form of the law, and not its restraining effect, which will render it unconstitutional, if it shall be so rendered. The great fear is that it may be made unconstitutional by the design of false friends, who, in pretending to carry out the views of their constituents, purposely overdo the matter, so as to defeat the ostensible purpose of such legislation. There is a powerful party, firmly consolidated by a common interest, who are ready to resort to all practicable means to defeat the attempt which they perceive will be made in the legislature, this winter, to draw the teeth and pare the nails of the monster which has spread death and devastation through this fair land, for so many ages.

The song of unconstitutionality, which is always sung with such vociferation, when any deadly evil, which is productive of filthy lucre, is about to be attacked, is beginning to lose its charm; and resort must be had to more powerful measures. The most powerful of these measures will be *ploughing with the people's heifers*. Great care, therefore, is necessary to guard against those who will pretend to favor a restraining law, in the legislature, in pretended obedience to the known will of constituents, but with an ulterior design to favor a higher bidder, by pushing the contemplated act to a point beyond what would be sustained by the constituted guardians of the organic law of the state. We have never doubted that the clumsy bill which was passed last winter, was licked into its uncouth shape by tongues which were employed to render it as obnoxious as possible, that it might merit the fate which was a foregone conclusion with the Executive. In saying this, we have no intention to impeach the motives of those friends of a restraining law, who acted in good faith, and gave their votes for that bill because they could get no better.

The Governor says, and says truly; "If the purely moral aspect which it presents shall be deemed as not entering within the scope of your duties, its relation to taxation, is clearly within the province of legislation, and demands a degree of attention corresponding to the great issues which that relation involves." But we insist that the purely moral aspects which it presents, does enter into the scope of legislative duties. We do not believe that legislatures should legislate upon the moral aberrations of the people, in any case in which those aberrations do not affect the conventional, moral or pecuniary interests of the community of which the moral delinquent is a member. But the traffic in intoxicating liquors does affect every community in which it is carried on, in all its most important interests, and that in a manner more essentially prejudicial than the aggregate of all other moral delinquencies. A catalogue of the evils which it produces, would fill a volume. A picture of them, which would present them all in their true color, at a single view, would astound the mind, and rend the heart of a stoic. Let there—oh! let there, be a shield thrown over the rising generation, that children may no longer grow up with the seed of alcoholism madness germinating in their bones, and with its luring temptations presented to them wherever they go, wherever they look and wherever they are.

The subject of the revision of our Excise Laws will demand, and I doubt not will receive your serious attention. To the practical operation of these laws, either through their inherent viciousness or in consequence of their lax administration, is attributed no small proportion of the drunkenness which afflicts our land. Something of this is undoubtedly attributable to the non-enforcement of the laws, which are good; but I will not withhold my conviction that the laws themselves are radically defective, and however faithfully administered, must be held

justly responsible for the evils which they foster, and in many instances create.

If the consequences of intemperance were confined to its immediate victims, though even then the State would have an interest at stake, there might, perhaps, be less occasion for Legislative action. But such is not the fact. Every interest of society which it is the province of Government to protect is, immediately or remotely, involved in these consequences.

Intemperance deprives the State of the produce of its labor, diminishes its wealth, impedes its enterprise, and militates against the common good. It is a fruitful source of pauperism which imposes heavy burdens upon industry and capital; and its intimate relation to crime, and consequently to the burdens which crime imposes upon us, is too obvious to escape your observation.

If the purely moral aspects which it presents shall be deemed as not entering within the scope of your duties, its relation to taxation, and its producing causes, is clearly within the province of the system, viz.—the prohibition of the traffic in the public good must demand the constitutional limitation of the law-making power will permit. All restrictive legislation contains the germ of prohibition—in fact, prohibition partially applied; so that what is termed prohibitory legislation, in regard to the liquor traffic is only the extension of a principle endorsed as sound by successive Legislatures, and its impartial application to all. The object proposed by the founders of our State, when they incorporated the license system into its legislation, has not yet been attained; neither has the provision of the system, viz.—the prohibition of the traffic in the public good been demanded and the constitutional limitation of the law-making power will permit.

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## Lecture No. 5.—By Stephen R. Smith.

This lecture was received at three sittings, through Miss Brooks, by raps. Sometimes the conditions are such that the spirits communicate with great difficulty. A rank and damp atmosphere renders it almost impracticable for them to communicate at all. Sometimes the conditions are such that a lecture of this length is received in a single evening.

Let it be understood that all these lectures come through Miss B., by raps, unless we announce otherwise.

We had not thought of giving our readers any account of who Rev. STEPHEN R. SMITH was, when he inhabited a mortal tenement, because we knew that he was extensively known in this state, as well as in several other states of the Union. Inasmuch, however, as our paper now circulates farther than the compass of his acquaintance, it may not be amiss to state that he was an eminent Divine, of the Universalist persuasion—was respected and loved by all who knew him intimately, and held in high estimation by the community, as well for his moral perpendicularity as for his great abilities as a preacher of the gospel.

He had the pastoral charge of the First Universalist congregation of this city, from 1843 to 1849, and to within some four months of his decease. He labored to do good till his mortal body gave out in the service. He has now put on immortality, and inhabits a body which is indestructible. In this new and immortal body, he has recommended his labors of love; and he has already asked “those who listened to his teachings while upon earth, not to shun him if now he returns to them with higher perceptions of divine knowledge.” We too, hope they will not; but if they do, it shall not be our fault; for, whilst it is practicable for us to do so, we will give his teachings to the world, knowing that we can, in no other way, better serve God or His human children.

Thursday Evening, Dec. 28.

## The Immortality of the Soul.

Spiritual life is the divine essence of the immortal mind. Harmony, action and progression, the infinite principle of the spirit. The eternal soul is the embodiment of wisdom, love and divine harmony. We find that an immortalized matter forms the eternal and progressive mind. When the spirit is departing its earthly sphere, it passes through multitudinous processes; and while it is undergoing the change, its spiritual body, organization, is also being formed, so that what portion of refined matter goes to constitute that body, is separated from the human organization. It is gradually concentrated into the spiritual organization, until all the spiritually refined matter is attracted to the spiritual form, and the mind occupies its position in that body, and commences its glorious work of heavenly progression.

The immortal mind first aspires to define its eternal progression. Aspiration gives life and soul to the immortal spirit. Love gives the spirit its position in its new existence. It requires a God to appreciate a God. It also requires a harmonious mind to understand and appreciate harmony. Harmonious principles are first the deep study of the spirit. This is the life and action of its spiritual being. It is the type of the positive mind—the image of the Great Creator. The immortal soul is a glorious and happy one. It has labors to perform which elaborate and develop its mental faculties; and the spirit unfolds its vision to the researches of that divine knowledge, which emanates continually from the governing soul, and is conveyed by purely developed minds of higher spheres, to those of a lower sphere. All knowledge inculcated by the immortal mind advances its development in a degree higher; and thus it will ever work its way up through the spheres of an immortal progression, until its refinement will become so perfect that it forgets the universe of materiality. Upward and onward is the destiny of the spirit, through eternity, until it shall occupy the sphere of development that the Supreme Ruler now occupies; but no spirit will ever reach the throne of Deity.

The undeveloped spirit sees before him an embryo heaven; but truth illuminates his inner perception, and while his mind is dissolving into the beauties of a spiritual life, it yearns for that light which protects and guides the eternal mind. As flowers fade beneath the autumnal breeze, so the human form returns to dust, and another glorious world, and the undefinable beauties of another life, are revealed to the spirit. The mind awakens to the bright realities of a divine existence—Through the immortal soul steals the beautifying thoughts, awakened by the harmonious elements pervading the whole organization of nature. The spirit is disrobed of its evil tendencies and aspires to holier truths beyond its own sphere of development. The mind never ceases to progress. God progresses, and every mind is drawn towards Him, rising still higher and higher. God is the embodiment of perfection. He possesses the divine and infinite qualities of wisdom, love and holiness.

There is, throughout the universe of God, an everlasting and unchanging law, which harmonizes mind with mind, and every spiritual object with its like. This law is ORDER. The immortal soul cannot violate this law, for it partakes

of the divine essence which forms it; and its thoughts and aspirations are concentrated in this controlling principle of the spirit world.

There is a law, immutable and unchanging, which draws immortal souls indissolubly together; and this law is HARMONY. From this no spirit can stray; for, from the position of God, to the lowest sphere, harmony flows from the throne of Deity, through every mind, until it reaches the most undeveloped one. By this glorious law, every immortal soul is connected by unchanging ties of affection, and is drawn upwards towards its heavenly Father.

There is a law, celestial and infinite, its power omniscient, its omnipresence eternal. It is the in-dwelling spiritual principle of the thirsting and aspiring soul. It is the great, immortal impulse of the spirit. This law is characterized by life, motion and intelligence. It is deposited in the Divine Mind, and is thence distributed through every sphere. This law is WISDOM.

There is still another law. It is the law of refinement and expansion, that has no limitation. It inspires the spirit with veneration. It is the mainspring of progression. It is stamped upon every thing and every object. It is the law of LOVE. All these laws are locked together by one grand and harmonious law of omniscient power; and that is the law of God.

If every spirit could stand upon the immeasurable mound of intellectual elevation, and read every line traced upon the unbounded and illuminated page of nature, by the hand of God, to behold the many minds beneath itself, the attribute of aspiration would be quickened, and that mind rise rapidly to the sphere of wisdom; and, as from God descended still deeper truths, it would still aspire to something beyond—something greater and holier—something that would reveal its own destiny, and pure and infinite progression would mark its upward course.

God is the first cause, the positive mind. Nature is of his creation, and is negative. God never changes. His position is beyond modification or change. His qualities are superlatively perfect. God is the Father of all. Progression marks His eternal and divine career. He is the superlative magnet, and he is Deity. He stands at the head of spiritual and human beings, drawing them still higher and nearer to that grand position where every atom of matter which is congenital to that sphere of development shall have gone to assist in the organization of other spiritual structures. The spirit, when it arrives at this point in progression, ceases to communicate with mind lower than itself. The immortal soul is drawn infinitely nearer to God, when disrobed of gross materiality. Order, harmony, wisdom and love, are the four great and immutable laws that control the immortal mind. Those laws blend harmoniously together, and are tinted with the light emanating from the supremacy of our Heavenly Father.

Wisdom enlivens the immortal mind. Love harmonizes it. Order connects it in conjunction with the eternal laws of God; and harmony inspires it with deep and holy affection towards every being in a spiritual or material existence. The combination and blending of these laws forbid the heavenly spirit to violate the immutable principles of the Divine Mind. The immortal soul is ever bearing the hope which infuses into it the essence of infinite and harmonious elements. The immortal soul, when moving up and up forever, when asked, whether dost thou journey? turns its perception upon the searching mind, and responds: I follow my God. The human soul, when asked, whether do you go? must, with tenderness and generosity, look upon the seeking mind, point its pinions to the Supreme Ruler, and respond: To my home in heaven.

Truly Yours,  
STEPHEN R. SMITH.

The subject of Mr. Smith's next lecture will be “The Evils of the Present Age.”

## Lecture No. 2, by Edgar C. Dayton.

We had intended to give a history of our acquaintance with this spirit, introductory to his first lecture; but the press of other duties crowded it out of our recollection. We will now proceed to supply the omission.

He came to us at the close of a circle, of which I was a member, in the early part of last winter. There were but few of us remaining; and of that few he selected some four or five, to constitute a circle to receive instructive communications from him. At the second meeting of this little circle, he told us as follows, through Miss Brooks:

“My name was EDGAR C. DAYTON. I was born in Richmond, Virginia; lived there till I was seventeen years old; then emigrated to England; became Professor of Anatomy and Obstetrics, and lectured in all the dissecting rooms from Liverpool to London. Four years ago (now five years) when I was thirty-five years old, being at Bristol, I fell from the top of a flight of steps, thirty feet high, and died of concussion of the brain.”

Being perfectly satisfied with the account which this elevated spirit gave of himself, no one of the circle with whom he has been in communion, has taken the trouble to write for information, either to Richmond or to Liverpool. It would be a good test for any one who doubts the reality of spiritual communications, to write to those places and ascertain whether there was such a boy at Richmond, or such a man at Liverpool, London or Bristol:

## Physical and Spiritual Anatomy.

There are two worlds; one is the material world, through which pervades undeveloped and spiritual matter. The other is a universe which is capable of sustaining the highest degree of spiritually refined mind and matter. There are also two forms which the spirit in-

habits. One is the physical or original organization, the other is the spiritual form. These forms are not unlike. The spiritual form contains the highest sublimation of matter. There are laws equally magnanimous governing both of these forms. Each has an anatomy of itself. There are various functions in the human organization, performing its material work, developing and sustaining the beauty of human life. The brain is the seat of the mind; the heart the main-spring of life. In the spiritual form, mind and eternalized matter are the propelling forces of spiritual life. The mind is the heart, or the centre of life, in the eternal organization.

Matter is a power that gives action and force to the mind. It is constantly being thrown from higher spheres or loftier minds, developing and unfolding the faculties of the spirit. The spirit, when born into the new life, has its form created as the child has when it enters the earthly life. The only dissimilarity existing between the two, is this: the spiritual organization is much more sublimated and perfect. It is composed of the refined matter emanating from an immortal world. The human form partakes of undeveloped matter of an unrefined sphere, or from the animal kingdom.

The substance of which the human constitution partakes and requires, is analyzed and appropriated by the digestive functions and gastric fluid, and goes to create new muscles, nerves and arteries. The sublimated portion goes to constitute the spiritual principle, which gives action, motion and illumination to the entire organization of the mind and body. The lungs and heart are the centre of human life. The brain is a medium through which life and intellect are manifested. There is an eternal harmony wrought by the hand of God, existing throughout the physical structure—Every artery and function of the human body blends and performs its natural work from harmonious principles, unless the great physiological law of nature has been violated. If that eternal principle which governs the physical structure and adds beauty to human life, has been violated, then the constitutional susceptibility creates within itself a nervousness and impatience disturbing the elements of the spiritual principle, and thus the hand of disease crushes the natural powers of intellect, preventing the development of wisdom, and the personal forces flow through whatever channel surrounding influences may attract them to—This is the great obstruction to the pure and thorough refinement of the human spirit.

The inexhaustible material composing the spiritual organization, is matter. The all-sustaining principle of the spiritual form is nature. There is a law, universal and eternal, governing unchangeably, both mind and body. The mind is the centre of spiritual life. Its all-absorbing principle is the natural workings of harmony, created by a divine mind. Every atom which goes to constitute the spiritual form, is drawn together by nature; and the spirit, after leaving the material form, never disorganizes nor changes into another; for nature never changes its laws. Thus it is, that in heaven, the mind can range through the universe of God, and eternally retain its beauty and glory.

Does the spirit undergo a change analogous to the transition of the spirit from the physical structure? All forms were created from anatomical and physiological laws. Every structure is composed of matter, and matter is substance. Now, when the spirit leaves the human form, it is, by an anatomical process, separated entirely from the form. It, the spirit, separates itself from the earthly sphere. After the spirit is freed from its gross materiality, it inhabits another structure analogous to the human body. The matter constituting the spiritual form, has the same degree of development corresponding with the mind. And now, instead of the spirit separating itself from this physiological body, in order to dwell in the next sphere higher, the body throws off the undeveloped matter which is inanimate to the condition of that development which the mind aspires to. As the mind progresses in sublimation and development, so does the body. As the mind throws off its undeveloped matter, as it becomes more sublimated, so does the spiritual structure which inhabits, throw off, by anatomical principles, the inanimate matter pervading it. Now, this is a change analogous to the change of the mind from the physical or human system. The difference existing between the two changes or separations, is this: The spirit, by physiological principles, established by God, separate itself from the human form. The change, after the spirit takes up its abode in a spiritual structure, instead of the mind separating from that form, the undeveloped matter is disorganized from both body and mind, and goes to constitute other physical structures.

Upon the same method of organization, creations originate from anatomical laws; and as they progress in refinement, the undeveloped matter thrown off in their progression, goes to form minerals; and by geological process, these minerals also become more and more sublimated. Every thing in creation has an anatomy. The mind has an anatomy. The body has an anatomy. Nature has an anatomy. The spiritual structure has a cerebral organization analogous to the human brain. But when mortals hear, their hearing is produced through an organ of hearing. So with tasting and seeing. Now, the mind, after becoming immortalized, hears from an immutable law of perception; and this law, being characterized by harmony, action and perception, seeing and tasting are produced by the same universal principle.

The spirit, though its form is analogous to the human form, does not hear by an organ through which hearing is produced; but when it hears it hears by perception. Nor does the spirit form, or the spirit, require such substance to impart strength and vitality, as the mind in the human body requires. Wisdom and purity are the sustaining principles of the immortal mind. Hearing, seeing, tasting and feeling, are produced by the law of perception. When a spirit of a higher sphere wishes to speak with one of a lower sphere, it is not necessary for the one spirit to find the other and talk face to face; but by the law of perceptual attraction—by natural intuition, the higher spirit can attract the mind of the lower; and by a mental telegraph, can gain the information required. And in this manner, or by this method, thoughts are conveyed from God to the next development, and so on, until they are carried to their destined objects. This is what we term mental telegraphing, by perceptual attraction.

In tracing the planetary system, we find one planet that holds intercourse with immortal minds, by the telegraphing of mentality. This planet is Saturn. The organization of this planet, is much more harmonious and beautiful than your planet, Earth. The law of harmony exists there; and the minds dwelling in that universe being much more sublimated than earthly minds, they have observed the laws of nature and God; and they seek for wisdom, and find it. Hence, the law of wisdom governs their actions. The inhabitants occupying this world, have passed the meridian of iniquity. They are much more perfect in form than the inhabitants of any other planet. On this planet, mind blends with nature, and nature responds to every wish, and awakens still greater desires for wisdom and knowledge. Hence, it earnestly endeavors to discern the rich mines of wisdom that lie buried in the immeasurable depths of eternity.

We also find a connective attraction existing between all planets, each having its corresponding attraction to the spirit world. And now, however strange it may appear to you, there will be, as mind develops, a communication established between the minds of Earth and the minds of other planets. Before a free and undisturbed intelligence is communicated from the departed spirit to the earthly spirit, there must be a free intercourse existing between Earth and those planets farther advanced in development. Minds inhabiting the planet Saturn, know from intuitive perception, the condition of other planets. The spirit land and every out-creation, or planet, must be governed by the grand laws of order, wisdom and harmony, before a true and definite knowledge of the human spirit's future destiny shall be clearly understood.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

## “Lyric of the Morning Land.”

We have received, from the publishers, (Messrs. Partridge and Britton,) this “child of the skies,” communicated through Rev. T. L. HARRIS, who has already been made the medium of poetical wonders, which, if denied the spiritual origin, would astonish the world.

It is voluminous, and withal so sublimely grand and beautiful, as the “Epic of the Starry Heaven,” and the “Lyric of the Morning Land,” to be produced in an aggregate of detached periods of time less than a single day, without spirit agency, would be harder to believe than the whole spirit philosophy.

We shall not venture to speak of the merits of this wonderful poem, but shall, occasionally, quote from it, that our readers may judge for themselves. We copy “The Poet's story,” who gives an account of his decease and entrance into the spirit world.

## The Poet's Story.

Don't stand so near me—give me air—I faint—I choke—’tis dark—good-bye—I rise; see I am body lie Beneath me. Friends I loved are there. I hear them talk. I see them shed Big tears, and now they call me dead. They kiss the sunken cheeks; the chill Repels them; heart, breast, lips are still; The cold blood clouds in the veins; The nameless Terror comes and reigns. Can this be death? It is. I lay My spirit-hand upon the clay.

And feel that I have passed away.

Now, come what will, at least I'm free.

I fear not, though indeed I hear Men say that I am damned. How dear My fellow-creatures were to me.

I gave the life-blood of my thought,

Love, Truth and Peace, in deeds I wrought;

I poured my being out like wine.

And yet they call me damned—so ill!

Thus they calmly speak, before the tomb

Hats taken to its cold embrace.

My body's dust. My mortal race Is ended; Friends I loved so well

And why? Because I could not see That three were one and one was three.

## III.

I'll seek, O Life! thy wondrous climes. You Evening Star, how fair it shines!

You Morning Star. Day shout to day!

I will go upward. Saint and Sage

Have passed in mystic pilgrimage

This way before me—spirits just.

In thy dear love, O Lord! I trust.

Blessed and Beauteous, far away

On Angel mountains, where ye stray.

I'm holy contemplation, free

From Earth and from its agony,

Calm Socrates, and thou, the bright

And star-eyed Plato, let the light

Of your serenest world out-flame.

And guide me, for with single aim

I worshipped Wisdom. Ye have gone

Before me, and I follow on.

Fair would I sit with sage old,

O Pallas! in thy house of gold.

But hark! what strain is this I hear?

‘Tis sweet, ‘tis soft, and yet I fear.

And I follow on.

“Hail, stranger! welcome to our ivory hall; The undulating banners wave and fall Forever in our Heaven. The skies alway Are decked with yellow morning where we stay. The purple gloaming through the silver wolds Flies like a started hawk. The brightness molds Its falling star-flakes into fruits and flowers. And sparry grot, and high and spire-like towers, Where Wisdom sits, unseen but not unknown; And the still ether, like a jewelled zone That clasps the immortal form of purity.

In silence beats, vibrating ceaselessly, And Hesperus rocks upon the silver sea Of western Heaven, and speaketh audibly. And in the orient Jupiter appears.

Lo! here we dwell with Wisdom, and her years Flow over us, as flows the sea of fire From God into creation. Our desire Called thee from out the dust. Our thoughts prevail

To rule thy destiny. Hail, brother, hail!”

v.

I see a cataract of crimson fire.

As if a world were melted into flame.

Poured from the hollow sky,

Falling tumultuously,

And spreading as it rolls

With music like the utterance of all souls.

Into ten thousand, thousand worlds again.

And all the drops bloom into fiery suns,

And all the sparkles whirling from the pyre,

Are planet-girdled spheres and horizons,

And rainbow after rainbow spans the main,

And all that luminous mist,

By splendor clasped and kissed,

Kisses sublime on high,

And spreads, and swiftly

Forms an effulgent dome, a stellar fane,

And the transcendent brightness grows more bright,

Till the red cataract vanishes from sight.

v.

We also find a connective attraction existing between all planets, each having its corresponding attraction to the spirit world.

And now, however strange it may appear to you, there will be, as mind develops, a communication established between the minds of Earth and the minds of other planets.

Before this alternates: “Either to ascend,

Six days in planet Jupiter to spend;

Or else to be transported into Mars;

Or wander where the belted Saturn smiles;

Or float amid the radiant Summer isles;

Men call the Asteroids; or speed my flight

Where Mercury inhales the solar light.

VI.

But my spirit within me said, “Seek thou the land,

Far away from the Earth, where the weary

are glad,

Where the heart by the soft Summer music is fanned;

Where the Spirits of Beauty are deathlessly clad;

Where the sorrows of Earth are in rapture forgot,

Be that home of delight where it may.

Then I rose till I came to a balm-breathing spot,

And a Spirit of light led the way.

And I rested, entranced, like a dew-drop that sleeps.

In the heart of the Summer's first rose,

When the Angel of pleasure all silently keeps

A watch o'er its blissful repose.

VII.

There, when I woke, I woke to find.

That I had left all thought behind

Of lower Earth and earthly things;

Out from my breasts grew strong wings;

And when I spoke, my words out-flew

Like butterflies gold-winged and blue;

And when I thought, my thoughts took form;

And when I wished, my wish was born

Into an onward shape so fair

Its shafted brightness tinged the air

## Kirwan's Letters to Bishop Hughes.

### NUMBER III.

MY DEAR SIR.—In my last letter I commenced a statement to you of the causes which, in early life, caused my misgivings and distrust as to yours being a true church, and as to its holding the true faith. I referred to some incidents connected with the claims of your priests to miraculous power, with the doctrine of purgatory, and with praying to the saints. I shall now proceed with a statement of some more of those causes.

The doctrine of Confession is one of the primary doctrines of your church. It requires every good papist to confess his sins to a priest at least once a year. If any sins are concealed, none are forgiven. This doctrine makes the bosom of the priest the repository of all the sins of all the sinners of his parish, who make a conscience of confession. And this is one of the sources of the fearful power which your priests have over your people. And with this doctrine of Confession, is connected the power of the Father Confessor to grant Absolution to the confessing penitent. It is sometimes affirmed, and then denied, to suit circumstances, that the priest claims such power. But Dr. Challoner in his "Catholic Christian Instructor," Chap. 9th, asserts this power, and on what he deems scriptural authority. And I never knew an individual who came from Confession with the privilege of partaking of the Communion, who did not feel and believe that his sins were forgiven him. And if they were not immediately forgiven, they would on the performance of the prescribed penances. You, sir, will not say, that I either misstate or misrepresent the doctrine.

Now for some of my early impressions upon this subject. Father M. held frequently his confessions at our house. He sat in a dark room up stairs with one or more candles on a table before him. Those going to Confession followed each other on their knees from the front door, through the hall, up the stairs, and to the door of the room. When one came out of the confessing-room another entered. My turn came—I entered the room, from which the light of day was excluded, and bowed myself before the priest. He made over me the sign of the cross, and after saying something in Latin, he ordered me to commence the detail of my sins. Such was my fright that my memory soon failed in bringing up past delinquencies. He would prompt me, and ask, did you do this thing, or that thing? I would answer yes, or no. And when I could say no more he would wave his hand over me and again utter some words in Latin, and dismiss me. Through this process I often went, and never without feeling that my sins were forgiven. Sins that burdened me before, were now disregarded. The load of guilt was gone. And I often felt, when prompted to sin, that I could commit it with impunity, as I could soon confess it and secure its pardon. And this, sir, is the fearful and fatal effect of your doctrine of Confession and Absolution upon millions of minds.

The questions however often came up—why does the priest go into a dark room in the daytime? Why not speak to me in English, and not in Latin? How can he forgive sin? What, if my sins, after all, are not forgiven? And I always found that I could play my pranks better after confession than before, for I could go at them with a lighter heart. Very early in life my confidence in this doctrine of Confession was shaken; and at a later period I came to the conclusion that it was a priestly device to enslave the conscience, and to enslave men.

Another thing which made early a deep impression on my mind was this. On my first remembered journey to Dublin we passed by a place, called, unless I mistake, St. John's Well. It is, as you know, one of the "Holy Wells" of Ireland. There was a vast crowd of poor-looking and diseased people around it. Some were praying, some shouting; many were up in the trees which surrounded it. All these trees were laden, in all their branches, with shreds of cloth of every possible variety and colour. I inquired what all this meant. I was told: "This is St. John's Well, and these people came here to get cured." But what do those rags mean, hanging on the trees? I was told, that the people who were not immediately cured, tied a piece of their garments on some limb of the trees, to keep the good Saint of the Well in mind of their application. And judging from the number of pieces tied on the trees, I inferred that the number that went away cured were very few. I had previously read some travels in Africa, describing some of the religious rites of the sable sons of that continent; and the thought that those performed around St. John's Well were just like them, occurred to me. I have no doubt but that the rites witnessed in my youth are performed there yet—that the rags of diseased persons are now streaming from those trees to remind the Saint of the requests of those who suspended them. There was always a priest present to hear confessions, and to receive the pennies of the poor pilgrims. And the impression then made upon my mind was, that it was a piece of paganism. And the rites and ceremonies about this Well, I learn, are nothing in comparison with those performed at the Wells of Saint Patrick in the County Down. I will here insert an account of a festival at St. Patrick's Well as given by an eye-witness.

"When or how the custom which I shall describe originated, I know not, nor is it necessary to inquire; but every midsummer eve thousands of Roman Catholics, many from distant parts of the country, resort to these celebrated wells of the country, resort to these wells to cleanse their souls from sin, and clear their mortal bodies of disease. The influx of people of different ranks, for some nights before the one in which alone, during the whole year, these wells possess this power (for on all other days and nights in the year they rank not above common draw-wells), is prodigious; and their attendants, hordes of beg-

gars, whose ragged garments, if once taken off, could not be put on again by the ingenuity of man, infest the streets and lanes, and choose their lodgings in the highways and hedges. Having been previously informed of the approach of this miraculous night, and having made ourselves acquainted with the locality of the wells, early in the evening we repaired to the spot; we had been told that we should see something quite new to us, and we met with what scarcely was credible on ocular evidence. The spot on which this scene of superstition fully was exhibited, was admirably adapted to heighten every attendant circumstance in it; the wells, of which there are four, being situated by steep rocks which reverberated every sound, and redoubled all the confusion. The coup d'œil of the square on our approach presented a floating mass of various colored heads, and our ears were astonished with confused and mingled sounds of mirth and sorrow, of frantic, enthusiastic joy, and deep, desponding ravings. On descending into the square we found ourselves immediately in the midst of innumerable groups of these fanatics, running in all directions, confusedly, in appearance, but methodically, as we afterwards found in reality—the men and the women were barefooted, and the heads of all were bound round with handkerchiefs. Some were running in circles, some were kneeling in groups, some were singing in wild concert, some were jumping about like maniacs at the end of an old building, which, we were told, was the ruins of a chapel erected, with several adjacent buildings, in one miraculous midsummer's night, by the tutelary saint of the wells, of whose talents as a mason they give, it must be confessed, no very exalted opinion. When we had somewhat recovered from the first surprise to which the to us, unaccountably fantastic actions of the crowd had given us, we endeavored to trace the progress of some of these deluded votaries through all the mazes of their mystic penance. The first object of them all appeared to be the ascent of the steepest and most rugged part of the rock, up which both men and women crawled their painful way on their hands and bare knees. The men's clothes were all made so as to accommodate their knees with all the sharpness of the pointed rock; and the poor women, many of them young and beautiful, took incredible pains to prevent their petticoats from affording any defense against its torturing asperities. Covered with dust and perspiration, and blood, they at last reached the summit of the rock, where, in a rule sort of chair hewn out of the stone, sat an old man, probably one of their priesthood, who seemed to be the representative of St. Patrick, and the high-priest of this religious frenzy. In his hat each of the penitents deposited a half-penny, after which he turned them round a certain number of times, listened to the long catalogue of their offences, and dictated to them the penance they were to undergo or perform. Then they descended the rock by another path, but in the same manner and posture, equally careful to be cut by the flint, and to suffer as much as possible: this was, perhaps, the painful traveling that the saint had been—the suffering knees were rubbed another way—every step threatened a tumble; and if anything could have been lively there, the ridiculous attitudes of these descendants would have made us so. When they gained the foot of the hill they, most of them, bestowed a small donation of charity on some miserable groups of supplicants who were stationed there. One beggar, a cripple, sat on the ground, at one moment addressing the crowd behind him, and swearing that all the Protestants ought to be burnt out of the country, and in the same breath, begging the penitents to give him one half-penny for the love of "sainte blessed Jesus." The penitents now returned to the use of their feet, and commenced a running sort of Irish jiggish walk round several cairns or heaps of stones erected at different spaces: this lasted for some time. Suddenly they would prostrate themselves before the cairn and ejaculate some hasty prayers, as suddenly they would rise and resume their mill-horse circumnavigation. Their eyes were fixed; their looks spoke anxiety, almost despair; and the operation of their faculties seemed totally suspended. They then proceeded to one end of the old chapel, and seemed to believe that there was a virtue, unknown to us heretics, in one particular stone of the building, which every one was careful to touch with the right hand; those who were tall did it easily; those who were less, left no mode of jumping unpracticed to accomplish it. But the most remarkable, and doubtless the most efficient of the ceremonies, was reserved for the last; and surely nothing was ever devised by man which more forcibly evinced how low our nature can descend. Around the largest of the wells, which was in a building very much, to common eyes, like a stable, all those who had performed their penances were assembled, some dressing, some undressing, many stark naked. A certain number of them were admitted at a time into this holy well, and there men and women of every age bathed promiscuously without any covering. They undressed before bathing, and performed the whole business of the toilet afterwards in the open air, in the midst of the crowd, without appearing sensible of the observations of lookers-on, perfectly regardless of decency, perfectly deaf to all natural sensations. This was a strange sight, but so nearly resembling the feast of lunatics, that even the voluntary would have beheld it without any emotion, but those of detestation. The penance having terminated in this marvelous abomination, the penitents then adjourned either to booths and tents to drink, or join their friends. The air then rang with musical monotonous singing, which became louder with every glass of whiskey, finishing in frolicsome dereliction, and laying, in all probability, the foundation for future penances and more thorough ablations. No man can describe all the confusion, no description can give a just idea of the noise and disorder which filled this *hallowed* square, this theatre of fanaticism, this temple of superstition, of which the rites rival all that we are told of in the East. The minor parts of the spectacle were filled up with credulous mothers, half drowning their poor children to cure their sore eyes; with poor cripples who exhibited everything that has yet been discovered in deformity, expecting to be washed straight, and to walk away nimble and comely.

"The experience of years had not shaken their faith; and though nobody was cured, nobody went away doubting. Shouting and howling and swearing and carousings filled up every pause, and 'threw o'er this spot of earth the air of hell.' I was never more shocked and struck with horror; and perceiving many of them intoxicated with religious fervor and all-potent whiskey, and warming into violence before midnight, at which time the distraction was at its climax, I left this scene of human degradation in a state of mind not easily to be described. The whole road from the wells to the neighboring town was crowded with such suplicants as preferred mortal half-pence to holy penance. The country around was illuminated with watch-fires; the demons of discord and fear were abroad in the air; the pursuits of the world, and the occupations of the peaceful, appeared but a stop to by the performance of ceremonies disgraceful when applied to propitiate an all-compassionate Divinity, whom these religionists were determined and taught to consider jealous rather than merciful. I wish it

were in my power, without insincerity, to pay a compliment to the Irish Catholic clergy. On this occasion they were the mad priests of these Bacchanalian orgies; the fomenters of fury; the setters-on to strife; the mischievous ministers of the debasement of their people, lending their aid to plunge their credulous congregations in ceremonial horrors."—*McGavin's Protestant*, p. 403.

Now, sir, can you, as a man of high intelligence, regard these things in any other light than as the mere impostures to delude the ignorant? And what epithet sufficiently expressive of abhorrence can we apply to the priesthood who thus impose upon a credulous people?

I well remember yet another of these impositions. When a boy I often heard that on the morning of Easter Sunday, the sun might be seen dancing in the heavens and in the chapels, to express its joy on the anniversary of the resurrection of Christ. And I often wished to be where I could witness the phenomenon. It took place in a certain chapel, in the presence of many pious and admiring beholders. An unbeliever in priestly miracles was present, who traced up the dancing of the sunbeams through the chapel to an individual managing concealed mirrors, so as to produce the wonderful effect! Of this I heard; and although it seemed incredible, yet it made an impression on my mind. The probability of the imposture cannot be doubted by those who know that the earth which covers the grave of Father Sheely (who was convicted of treason, and hung in the County of Tipperary), when boiled in milk, cures a variety of diseases.

The Bible, with all its notes and glosses, as published by the authority of your own church, is denied by you to be a complete rule of faith. On this question I will not now enter, only so far as to say that this denial holds a very intimate connexion with its virtual withholding from the people. If not a complete rule, it may lead astray; and as it is capable of opposite interpretation, in some of its passages, the souls of the people must not be endangered by its general circulation. It is better to know nothing of the Bible, than in some particular to misinterpret it! Your infallible church teaches both ways on a variety of subjects, and among the rest, on the circulation of the Bible. It allows it in Protestant countries, with some stringent regulations; it virtually forbids it in purely Papal countries. How many Bibles could your Reverence procure in Spain, Portugal, Naples, or Italy? How many Spaniards or Italians have ever read a Bible through?

How many of the Irish peasantry that can read and write have ever read ten chapters of it? Now, sir, for years together I sat daily at table with a Catholic priest, who was a member of the family, and the curate of the parish; and I never saw a Bible used in the family. I never

heard at table, or in the morning, or in the evening, a religious service. The numbers of

the Douay Bible published by subscription in folio, were taken in the family, but never read. And not only so, but I never heard a sermon preached in a Catholic chapel in Ireland; nor a word of explanation on a single Christian topic, doctrine, or duty. And before I was sixteen years of age I never read a chapter in the word of God, whilst in other respects my education was not neglected. I often asked the meaning of this thing and the other; but there was no explanation. Nor can one out of one thousand, in Papal countries, give a single reason for one of your peculiar doctrines or duties. And since in the maturity of my judgment I have examined this matter, I have greatly commended your wisdom in withholding the Bible from the people; if I were a bishop or a priest of your church I would do the same. I heard a man who lived near the Canada line, in Vermont, during the last war with Great Britain, tell the following story: "There was," said he, "much smuggling going on. Whenever we met a traveler with a pack of any kind, we ordered it to be searched. Honest men always said, 'search and welcome.' But whenever a man refused, or made any fuss about it, we always suspected that there were contraband goods in the pack; and we were never mistaken." You have brought contraband goods into the house of God, and the Bible tells the people so. Hence it is forbidden. Light is the sure death of darkness. The circulation of the Bible will be the death of poverty.

With great respect, yours,

KIRWAN.

### Americanism and Slavery.

One of the most interesting questions connected with the American movement, is the inquiry as to what policy the party will pursue in regard to an institution that has completely disorganized and ruined the two old political parties, and which it is strongly believed and predicted will yet scatter to the winds what to day is a mighty and irresistible political organization. We have already noticed that in the Senate, Adams of Mississippi, has introduced a bill of the same character as that desired by the new party; while, in the House, Barry of the same State has violently and bitterly attacked the whole party; and Henry Wise, the most insolent advocate of slavery that the South possesses, is also opposed to the whole movement. Another fact in this connection should not be lost sight of, and that is, the most popular man in the party, talked of as a candidate for the presidency, is anti-Nebraska, heart and soul. But if we lacked positive proof of the feelings of the masses of the party in regard to slavery, the last election in this and other States in the Union, show the liberal tendencies of the whole party. In New York, the American Party polled 122,000 votes; but they aided the Anti-slavery party in that State in returning to the next Congress twenty-nine men opposed to the admission of slavery into Kansas. In Pennsylvania we saw a like result, while in Illinois,

by the aid of this movement, the Douglassites were completely routed; and so in Michigan, where the whole State was carried for freedom, by the council fires of the American Party.

Since last April, the American Party have elected nine Anti-Nebraska governors, in as many states; seven of which last year had democratic executives. In our own State the party has sent to Congress six out and out free soilers, while the whole state government is thoroughly anti-slavery. New Jersey furnishes also another strong proof of the tendency of the party, the Americans in that State returning a complete delegation to Congress in favor of freedom in Kansas, and the restoration of the Missouri Compromise. The party has defeated almost every northern man that voted for the Nebraska bill; and it has completely revolutionized the House of Representatives; but for three years two thirds of the Senate will be beyond its reach. Thus far the party has professed nothing, but silently, powerfully and successfully, yet it made an impression on my mind.

On descending into the square we found ourselves immediately in the midst of innumerable groups of these fanatics, running in all directions, confusedly, in appearance, but methodically, as we afterwards found in reality—the men and the women were barefooted, and the heads of all were bound round with handkerchiefs. Some were running in circles, some were kneeling in groups, some were singing in wild concert, some were jumping about like maniacs at the end of an old building, which, we were told, was the ruins of a chapel erected, with several adjacent buildings, in one miraculous midsummer's night, by the tutelary saint of the wells, of whose talents as a mason they give, it must be confessed, no very exalted opinion. When we had somewhat recovered from the first surprise to which the to us, unaccountably fantastic actions of the crowd had given us, we endeavored to trace the progress of some of these deluded votaries through all the mazes of their mystic penance. The first object of them all appeared to be the ascent of the steepest and most rugged part of the rock, up which both men and women crawled their painful way on their hands and bare knees. The men's clothes were all made so as to accommodate their knees with all the sharpness of the pointed rock; and the poor women, many of them young and beautiful, took incredible pains to prevent their petticoats from affording any defense against its torturing asperities. Covered with dust and perspiration, and blood, they at last reached the summit of the rock, where, in a rule sort of chair hewn out of the stone, sat an old man, probably one of their priesthood, who seemed to be the representative of St. Patrick, and the high-priest of this religious frenzy. In his hat each of the penitents deposited a half-penny, after which he turned them round a certain number of times, listened to the long catalogue of their offences, and dictated to them the penance they were to undergo or perform. Then they descended the rock by another path, but in the same manner and posture, equally careful to be cut by the flint, and to suffer as much as possible: this was, perhaps, the painful traveling that the saint had been—the suffering knees were rubbed another way—every step threatened a tumble; and if anything could have been lively there, the ridiculous attitudes of these descendants would have made us so. When they gained the foot of the hill they, most of them, bestowed a small donation of charity on some miserable groups of supplicants who were stationed there. One beggar, a cripple, sat on the ground, at one moment addressing the crowd behind him, and swearing that all the Protestants ought to be burnt out of the country, and in the same breath, begging the penitents to give him one half-penny for the love of "sainte blessed Jesus."

The penitents now returned to the use of their feet, and commenced a running sort of Irish jiggish walk round several cairns or heaps of stones erected at different spaces: this lasted for some time. Suddenly they would prostrate themselves before the cairn and ejaculate some hasty prayers, as suddenly they would rise and resume their mill-horse circumnavigation. Their eyes were fixed; their looks spoke anxiety, almost despair; and the operation of their faculties seemed totally suspended. They then proceeded to one end of the old chapel, and seemed to believe that there was a virtue, unknown to us heretics, in one particular stone of the building, which every one was careful to touch with the right hand; those who were tall did it easily; those who were less, left no mode of jumping unpracticed to accomplish it. But the most remarkable, and doubtless the most efficient of the ceremonies, was reserved for the last; and surely nothing was ever devised by man which more forcibly evinced how low our nature can descend. Around the largest of the wells, which was in a building very much, to common eyes, like a stable, all those who had performed their penances were assembled, some dressing, some undressing, many stark naked. A certain number of them were admitted at a time into this holy well, and there men and women of every age bathed promiscuously without any covering. They undressed before bathing, and performed the whole business of the toilet afterwards in the open air, in the midst of the crowd, without appearing sensible of the observations of lookers-on, perfectly regardless of decency, perfectly deaf to all natural sensations. This was a strange sight, but so nearly resembling the feast of lunatics, that even the voluntary would have beheld it without any emotion, but those of detestation. The penance having terminated in this marvelous abomination, the penitents then adjourned either to booths and tents to drink, or join their friends. The air then rang with musical monotonous singing, which became louder with every glass of whiskey, finishing in frolicsome dereliction, and laying, in all probability, the foundation for future penances and more thorough ablations. No man can describe all the confusion, no description can give a just idea of the noise and disorder which filled this *hallowed* square, this theatre of fanaticism, this temple of superstition, of which the rites rival all that we are told of in the East. The minor parts of the spectacle were filled up with credulous mothers, half drowning their poor children to cure their sore eyes; with poor cripples who exhibited everything that has yet been discovered in deformity, expecting to be washed straight, and to walk away nimble and comely.

"The experience of years had not shaken their faith; and though nobody was cured, nobody went away doubting. Shouting and howling and swearing and carousings filled up every pause, and 'threw o'er this spot of earth the air of hell.'

I was never more shocked and struck with horror; and perceiving many of them intoxicated with religious fervor and all-potent whiskey, and warming into violence before midnight, at which time the distraction was at its climax, I left this scene of human degradation in a state of mind not easily to be described. The whole road from the wells to the neighboring town was crowded with such suplicants as preferred mortal half-pence to holy penance. The country around was illuminated with watch-fires; the demons of discord and fear were abroad in the air; the pursuits of the world, and the occupations of the peaceful, appeared but a stop to by the performance of ceremonies disgraceful when applied to propitiate an all-compassionate Divinity, whom these religionists were determined and taught to consider jealous rather than merciful. I wish it

At eight o'clock, Mr. Benton, attended by a number of the magnates of the city, came upon the stage. His tall and portly form was wrapped in an ample cloak. His hair is white.

His manner was perfectly self-posseſſed, and his movements were calm and dignified. We had expected to see a ruddier and grosser man; but his large countenance is fair; he wore spectacles, and he had more the aspect of a venerable professor, than of a senator who had stamped Missouri. His face is a strong and pleasing one, and he has a feature in common with all strong men, namely, a large, long nose. His reception by the audience was cordial, but not enthusiastic.

Mr. Benton is a placid speaker. He has a remarkably clear, ringing voice, and was easily heard by all except those who sat in the outskirts of the audience, where other noises precluded.

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